

DESERT ANIMAL ADAPTATIONS

Desert Animal Adaptations Sheet

Kit Fox

- Doesn't need to drink water, since it gets all of its water from its prey
- Hair on the pads of their feet helps protect them from the hot desert ground
- Large ears filled with blood vessels that radiate heat, helping them cool off



Ground Squirrel

- Hold big, bushy tails over their head for shade
- Lay flat against the ground under their tails or other shade to stay cool
- Burrow for shelter using long sharp claws
- Active during the day when it's too hot for most predators



Desert Kangaroo Rat

- Huge hind legs make it so they can jump 9' at a time
- Digests all of the water out of their food
- Don't need water to bathe - instead, they roll around in the sand to stay clean
- When running, they will kick sand behind them to blind predators



Chuckwalla

- Need a high body heat, so they spend their mornings basking in the sun
- Inhale to increase their body size, wedging them into crevasses so predators can't pull them out
- Store fat in their tails for when food is scarce
- Can sacrifice their tails if they're caught by a predator
- Can change the color of their bodies to blend in



Mojave Desert Sidewinder

- Camouflaged to blend in with the ground
- Lies in wait for prey to conserve energy
- Horns over their eyes protect their eyes from sand and sun
- Instead of slithering lengthwise, they slither side to side so that only a small part of their body touches the hot ground



Cactus Wren

- Forages on the ground in morning while its cool, then shifts to cooler places as it gets warmer
- Nests on thorny cactuses where predators can't reach them
- Gets all the water it needs from seeds

